

STUDENT RESOURCE SHEET 2

THE PATH TO 9/11

Numerous governmental agencies responded to the events of September 11, each contributing information and resources. The departments played different roles before, during, and after 9/11. Since the terrorist attacks, many of these departments have been restructured to improve overall communication and pool resources. Below are some important agencies and departments.

Key Governmental Organizations

9/11 Commission

- Officially known as the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States
- Created by congressional legislation and chartered by President Bush on November 27, 2002, to investigate and report on the events leading up to and including the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001
- Comprises five Republicans and five Democrats
- Released a 585-page report on July 22, 2004; the Commission found that numerous government agencies, including the CIA and FBI, made mistakes and failed to prevent the attacks

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)

- Part of the Department of Justice
- Investigates and reduces crimes involving firearms, explosives, arson, and the illegal trafficking of alcohol and tobacco
- Helped investigate the World Trade Center bombing in 1993
- Worked with the FBI in finding and arresting suspected terrorists

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

- Part of the The United States Intelligence Community, led by the Director of National Intelligence, who reports directly to the President of the United States
- Obtains information about foreign governments, groups, and individuals
- Accused by the 9/11 Commission of failing to properly communicate information about terrorists to the FBI, FAA, and other groups



Capitol Building, © Andrea Pistoletti/The Image Bank/Getty Images.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

- Created in 2002 by President George W. Bush
- Comprises more than twenty-two agencies and departments, including the Transportation Security Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Coast Guard
- Charged with handling and organizing the security of the United States

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

- Part of the Department of Transportation
- Responsible for overseeing all aspects of air traffic, including safety regulations, airspace and air traffic management, air navigation facilities, civil aviation abroad, commercial space transportation, and research/engineering/development
- Communicates with aircraft through air traffic control centers
- Sets security enforcement standards for aviation
- On September 11, different branches of the FAA were monitoring the hijacked airplanes but failed to communicate with other agencies effectively

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

- Part of the Department of Justice
- Charged with investigating all federal crimes, except those specifically assigned to other agencies

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- Helped lead investigation of the 9/11 attacks
- Accused by the 9/11 Commission of failing to properly communicate information about terrorists to the CIA, FAA, and other groups

North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)

- Created as a joint effort between Canada and the United States; operates as part of the U.S. Military
- In charge of defending and protecting the airspace of the United States
- Asked by the FAA for military assistance on 9/11
- Dispatched fighter jets to monitor the hijacked planes on 9/11, but the planes had already crashed

National Security Agency (NSA)

- Part of the Department of Defense
- Acts as the government's cryptology center, protecting U.S. communications from being intercepted or deciphered while collecting and analyzing information from foreign governments and groups
- One of the most technologically advanced government organizations
- Under the auspices of the Intelligence Community, led by the Director of National Intelligence, who reports directly to the President of the United States

National Security Council

- At the discretion of the President and based on the situation or event, usually made up of top military, political, and economic advisors, as well as Cabinet officials that represent different divisions of the government
- Advises the President on matters of national security and foreign policy
- Works with the President to coordinate policies and decisions with all government departments and divisions

The United States Intelligence Community

- Coordinates communication between sixteen separate government agencies
- Includes the CIA, FBI, DHS, NSA, and other divisions
- Led by the Director of National Intelligence, who reports directly to the President of the United States



Pentagon, © Department of Defense-photo by Master Sgt. Ken Hammond, U.S. Air Force.

For more information on September 11 and related topics, visit these Web sites:

- The 9/11 Commission Report:
www.gpoaccess.gov/911/index.html
- The CIA World Factbook:
www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives: www.atf.gov
- Central Intelligence Agency: www.cia.gov
- Department of Homeland Security: www.dhs.gov
- Federal Aviation Administration: www.faa.gov
- Federal Bureau of Investigation: www.fbi.gov

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Be sure to watch *The Path to 9/11* beginning on Sunday, September 10, 8-11 P.M. E.T. and concluding on Monday, September 11, 8-10 P.M. E.T.